

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENTI 00986 01 OF 03 061419Z

41

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-11 ISO-00 DPW-01 AID-20 IO-14 OMB-01

SSO-00 NSCE-00 EB-11 AGR-20 TRSE-00 COME-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-/03 SS-20 SAM-01 FEA-02 INT-08 CU-04

DRC-01 /196 W

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O R 061135Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7583

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL UDORN

USLO PEKING

USMISSION USUN

SECDEF

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USIA WASHDC

CINCPAC

CINCUSARPAC

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CDR USSAG NKP

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PAGE 02 VIENTI 00986 01 OF 03 061419Z

CDR 13 AF ADVON UDORN

USDAO SAIGON
COMUSMACTHAI
DODSPECREP BANKGOK
DODSPECREP NKP
354 TFW KORAT
CHSPECACTS BANGKOK
CDNBXOJSNVLOP
7 ACCS KORAT
432 TFW UDORN
8 TFW UBON
56 SOW NKP
388 TFW KORAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 VIENTIANE 0986

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD; 13 AF ADVON, 432 TFW, 56 SOW,
388 TFW, 354 TFW AND 8 TFW FOR DO/DI; MACTHAI FOR J-2
AND PAO

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, PGOV, PFOR, PINT, ECON, LA
SUBJECT: LAO WEEKLY SITREP - FEBRUARY 6

REF: VIENTIANE 0773

BEGIN SUMMARY: ON FEBRUARY 6, RLG AND LPF JUMPED MAJOR
HURDLE IN NEGOTIATING IMPLEMENTATION OF LAO PROTOCOL
WHEN JCCIA DELEGATIONS SIGNED AGREEMENTS GOVERNING JOINT
POLICE FORCES (JPFS) AND CIVIL ADMINISTRATION FOR NEUTRALI-
ZATION OF VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG. AGREEMENT ON
JPF IS AMBIGUOUS; BUT ENCOURAGES HOPE FOR EARLY FORMATION
OF NEW PGNU. ALTHOUGH DOCUMENTARY BASIS FOR NEUTRALI-
ZATION OF TWO CITIES HAS NOW BEEN COMPLETED, PUTTING
AGREEMENTS INTO PRACTICE MAY TAKE CONSIDERABLE TIME.
AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER AND MRS. WHITLAM VISITED
VIENTIANE FOR FIVE HOURS, FEBRUARY 4. WHITLAM GAVE
TIMELY SUPPORT TO SOUVANNA'S EFFORTS FOR LAO SETTLEMENT
AND INDICATED SOME NEW AUSTRALIAN AID FOR LAOS MAY BE
FORTHCOMING. STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST CORRUPTION
AND PROFITEERING BY FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC ELITE SPREAD TO
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PAGE 03 VIENTI 00986 01 OF 03 061419Z

SEVERAL TOWNS THROUGHT KINGDOM THIS WEEK. RLG HAS
REACTED CALMLY AND FOR MOST PART EFFECTIVELY TO DEMON-
STRATION. MILITARY ACTIVITY DURING WEEK ROSE TO HIGHEST
LEVEL SINCE SIGNING OF PROTOCOL, WITH 11 INCIDENTS RE-
PORTED, 6 ALLEGEDLY INITIATED BY NVA NORTHWEST OF THAKHEK. IN
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS, COST-OF-LIVING ROSE SLIGHTLY, BUT
ACUTE FUEL CRISIS HAS ENDED WITH RESUMPTION OF POL SHIP-
MENTS FROM THAILAND. END SUMMARY

I. IMPLEMENTING THE AGREEMENT

1. JOINT CENTRAL COMMISSION DEVELOPEMENTS

(A) ON FEBRUARY 6, LPF AND RLG JUMPED MAJOR HURDLE IN NEGOTIATING IMPLEMENTATION OF LAO PROTOCOL AS DELEGATIONS TO JCCIA MET AND, IN FORMAL CEREMONY, SIGNED AGREEMENTS GOVERNING (A) JOINT POLICE FORCES (JPFS) FOR VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG AND (B) ROLES AND DUTIES OF CIVIL ADMINISTRATION IN THE NEUTRALIZED CITIES.

(B) THE AGREEMENT ON JPFS DETAILS PROVISIONS ON LOCATION, INTERNAL ORGANIZATION, EQUIPMENT, OPERATIONS AND RIGHTS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE JPFS IN THE TWO CITIES. DESPITE ITS DETAIL, AGREEMENT FUZZES CONTENTIOUS QUESTIONS OF LINES OF COMMAND AND SCOPE OF JURISDICTION FOR JPFS; AND IT IS *OT AT ALL CLEAR THAT LPF HAS PREVAILED ON THESE ISSUES. AGREEMENT PROVIDES THAT "EACH PARTY SHALL CONTROL ITS POLICE FORCE" AND THAT THE "JPF OF THE TWO PARTIES AND THE SUB-COMMITTEES FOR THE NEUTRALIZATION OF EACH OF THE CITIES "MUST COOPERATE AND COORDINATE CLOSELY WITH THE ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITIES IN THE TWO CITIES." JOINT POLICE WILL HAVE THE BROAD JURISDICTION ADVOCATED BY LPF AND WILL PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING POLICE SERVICES: "SPECIAL," MUNICIPAL, TRAFFIC, IMMIGRATION JUDICIARY, PROTECTION (FOR PERSONNEL AND PREMISES), RIOT, PATROL, AIRPORT SECURITY, WATER AND FIRE. AGREEMENT STIPULATES THAT THE VIENTIANE GOVERNMENT'S POLICE FORCE MUST "TURN OVER ALL THE OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS OF ALL THE POLICE SERVICES IN THE TWO CITIES TO THE JPF OF THE TWO PARTIES"; BUT, THEN AMBIGUOUSLY IT ADDS THAT ANY FUNCTIONS "THAT HAVE NOT BEEN TURNED OVER TO THE JPF SHALL CONTINUE TO BE PERFORMED BY THE VIENTIANE GOVERN-
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PAGE 01 VIENTI 00986 02 OF 03 061452Z

51
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DRC-01 /196 W

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O R 061135Z FEB 74
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7584
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AMCONSUL UDORN
USLO PEKING
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PAGE 02 VIENTI 00986 02 OF 03 061452Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 VIENTIANE 0986

(C) AGREEMENT ON CIVIL ADMINISTRATION (WHICH WAS
NOT RELEASED TO THE PRESS TODAY) REPORTEDLY ELABORATES
ROLES AND DUTIES OF THE CHO MUONGS AND DEPUTY CHAO MUONGS,
PREFECTS AND DEPUTY PREFECTS OF LUANG PRABANG AND VIENTIANE

ALONG THE LINES SET FORTH IN PROGOCOL (ARTICLE 10(A)). AGREEMENT ADDS THAT THESE CIVIL AUTHORITIES SHOULD CLOSELY COOPERATE WITH JCCIA, JPF AND JOINT MILITARY FORCES (JMF S). THERE IS APPARENTLY NO INTENTION TO REPLACE THE INCUMBENT CIVIL ADMINISTRATORS IN THE TWO CITIES.

(D) TODAY'S BREAKTHROUGH FOLLOWED MEETING THAT PRIME MINISTER CONVOKED ON FEBRUARY 1 WITH CHAIRMEN OF RLG AND LPF DELEGATIONS TO JCCIA AND WITH RLG MINISTER OF INTERIOR PHENG PHONGSAVAN. PRIME MINISTER, AT THAT TIME, REPORTEDLY FAVORED PATHET LAO POSITION ON THE JURISDICTION AND LINES OF COMMAND FOR THE JPF S. JCCIA DELEGATIONS THEN MET AFTERNOON FEBRUARY 5 AND REACHED AGREEMENT ON DOCUMENTS SIGNED TODAY. DELEGATION SPOKESMEN SAID TODAY THAT THEY WOULD PRESENT COPIES OF THE SIGNED DOCUMENTS TO THE CIVIL ADMINISTRATORS IN CEREMONIES AT VIENTIANE ON FEBRUARY 9 AND AT LUANG PRABANG ON FEBRUARY 11. RLG DELEGATION CHIEF SOUKAN VILAYSARN STATED THAT WITH SIGNING OF ALL DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NEUTRALIZATION OF TWO CITIES, THE WAY IS NOW CLEAR FOR THE FORMATION OF THE NEW PGNU AND JNPC. SOUKAN ADDED THAT IF NO FURTHER OBSTACLES
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PAGE 03 VIENTI 00986 02 OF 03 061452Z

ARISE, THESE TWO ORGANIZATIONS COULD BE FORMED WITHIN A MONTH. LPF DELEGATION CHIEF SOTH PHETRASY WAS, PREDICTABLY, LESS SPECIFIC. HE OBSERVED THAT THE TWO SIDES SHOULD NOW MAKE EFFORTS TO FORM NEW PGNU AND JNPC AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, BUT FLAGGED CAVEAT THAT AGREEMENTS RELATING TO NEUTRALIZATION MUST NOW BE IMPLEMENTED.

(E) COMMENT: AGREEMENT ON JPF IS TYPICALLY LAO IN ITS AMBIGUITIES. ITS CAPACIOUS VAGUENESS SHOULD OFFER ROOM FOR CONSIDERABLE MANEUVERING AND EXEGESIS AS PARTIES PROCEED TO IMPLEMENT AGREEMENT. ALTHOUGH DOCUMENTARY BASIS FOR NEUTRALIZATION FOR VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG HAS NOW BEEN COMPLETED, PUTTING THESE AGREEMENTS INTO PRACTICE MAY TAKE MORE TIME THAN MANY THINK. IN ADDITION, QUESTION WHETHER NEW GOVERNMENT CAN BE FORMED OUTSIDE CONSTITUTIONAL APPROVAL BY NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IS STILL UNRESOLVED. NEGOTIATIONS ON EXACT PROCEDURE FOR INVESTITURE OF NEW GOVERNMENT MAY THUS ALSO TAKE SOME TIME.

II. VISIT OF AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER WHATLAM

AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER AND MRS. GOUGH WHITLAM VISITED LAOS FOR FIVE HOURS, FEBRUARY 4, MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA PHOUMA AND PATHET LAO DELEGATION CHIEF SOTH PHETRASY, AND ATTENDING PRIME MINISTER'S DINNER IN THEIR HONOR. DURING THE TALKS WITH SOUVANNA, WHITLAM EMPHASIZED AUSTRALIAN SUPPORT FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IN LAOS. WHITLAM'S VISIT GAVE A TIMELY PAT-ON-THE-BACK

FOR SOUVANNA AND POINTED UP FOREIGN SUPPORT FOR A LAO SETTLEMENT. SOME NEW AUSTRALIAN AID MAY BE FORTHCOMING FOR VIENTIANE WATERWORKS AND WHITLAM PROMISED TO CONSIDER AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPATION IN NAM NGUM PROJECT. SOUVANNA WAS QUITE PLEASED WITH VISIT AND EXTREMELY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR FORMING OR AT LEAST NAMING, NEW GOVERNMENT BY FEBRUARY 21.

III. STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS CONTINUE AND SPREAD

STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST CORRUPTION, HIGH COST OF LIVING, GASOLINE SHORTAGE AND ALLEGED THAI ECONOMIC DISCRIMINATION SPREAD TO SEVERAL TOWNS THROUGHOUT
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PAGE 04 VIENTI 00986 02 OF 03 061452Z

THE KINGDOM THIS WEEK. MOST WERE ORDERLY, BUT IN PAKSE SOME PROPERTY WAS REPORTEDLY DESTROYED BY SOME DISCONTENTED SAMLOR DRIVERS. THERE HAS BEEN NO CRITICISM OF AMERICAN OPERATIONS IN LAOS, DESPITE XENOPHOBIC OVERTONES IN STUDENT DEMANDS. LARGEST DEMONSTRATION, SUPPORTED BY KIP DENATIONS FROM TOWNSPEOPLE, HAS BEEN UNDERWAY IN SAVANNAKHET FOR SEVERAL DAYS. MINOR DEMONSTRATIONS OR SHOOL BOYCOTTS AND OTHER EXPRESSIONS OF DISSATISFACTION OCCURRED IN KENGKOK, THAKHEK, PHONE HONG (NORTH OF VIENTIANE) AND EVEN IN THE ISOLATED SOUTHER MILITARY FIEF-
DOM OF KHONG ISLAND. GENERALLY, NORTH LAOS HAS SO FAR BEEN SPARED. ROG HAS REACTED CALMLY AND EFFECTIVELY TO DEMONSTRATIONS, DISPATCHED GOVERNMENT LEADERS TO DISCUSS STUDENT DEMANDS AND REFRAINED FROM USE OF FORCE. SEVERAL LESSER DEMANDS HAVE BEEN MET. SOUVANNA IS AWARE THAT DEMONSTRATIONS COULD IMPERIL FORMATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT IF THEY ERUPT IN VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG WHEN NEUTRALIZATION FORCE STRUCTURES (JPF/PMF) ARE BEING INSTITUTED AND REGULAR POLICE HAVE RELINQUISHED JURISDICTION FOR THESE URBAN AREAS. THE LESSON OF BANGKOK IS ALSO WRIT LARGE IN LAO LEADERS' MINDS. STUDENT GROUPS HAVE BEEN REMARKABLY WELL ORGANIZED AND COORDINATED FOR LAO POLITICAL PHENOMENA. SOME LEADERS ARE APPARENTLY RECEIVING ADVICE FROM THAI STUDENT ACTIVISTS. NO DEMONSTRATION HAS SO FAR OCCURRED IN VIENTIANE, WHERE SOUVANNA IS TAKING A PERSONAL HAND. STUDENT MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 5 AT LAW SCHOOL DECIDED AGAINST DEMONSTRATIONS HERE AND EXPRESSED SUPPO
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PAGE 01 VIENTI 00986 03 OF 03 061429Z

41

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DRC-01 /196 W

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O R 061135Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7585

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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PAGE 02 VIENTI 00986 03 OF 03 061429Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 VIENTIANE 0986

SO FAR, LPF HAS STAYED ALOOF FROM DEMONSTRATIONS, REPORTING THEM ON RADIO PATHET LAO IN MATTER-OF-FACT TONE, ALTHOUGH STUDENT THEMES RUN PARALLEL TO LPF PROPAGANDA EFFORTS TO DISCREDIT "VIENTIANE GOVERNMENT SIDE." LPF MAY SEE DEMONSTRATIONS AS TROUBLESOME AND POTENTIALLY UNCONTROLLABLE PROBLEM AT TIME WHEN COMMUNIST ATTENTION MUST FOCUS ON NEXT STEP IN NEUTRALIZATION OF VIENTIANE/LUANG PRABANG AND ON FORMATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT. STUDENTS HAVE NOW HAD TEN DAYS TO BLOW OFF STEAM AND ARE AWARE THAT THEY HAVE PROVOKED GREAT CONCERN BY RLG. IN VIENTIANE, THEY SEEM DISPOSED TO TAKE A BREATHING SPELL; BUT LATEST REPORTS FROM SAVANNAKHET INDICATE THAT STUDENTS MARCHING TOWARD THAT TOWN FROM THAKHEK AND KENG KOK WERE EMBITTERED WHEN TURNED BACK BY MILITARY AND POLICE ON FEBRUARY 5. THOSE STUDENTS HAVE THREATENED TO RESUME MARCHING WITH LARGER FORCES ON FEBRUARY 7. THEIR LEADERS HAVE ALSO ASSERTED THEY WOULD DEMAND AND AUDIENCE WITH PRIME MINISTER IF THEY DO NOT GET ADEQUATE REDRESS FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

IV. SECURITY SITUATION

MILITARY ACTIVITY FOR THE WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 6

ROSE TO HIGHEST LEVEL SINCE THE SIGNING OF THE LAO PROTOCOL
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PAGE 03 VIENTI 00986 03 OF 03 061429Z

ON SEPTEMBER 14, WITH 11 INCIDENTS REPORTED, ALL IN SOUTH LAOS. EIGHT CLASHES OCCURRED IN MR-III BETWEEN JANUARY 29 AND FEBRUARY 1 IN AN AREA 32-38 KILOMETERS NORTHWEST OF THAKHEK. RLGAF REPORTS THAT SIX OF THESE INCIDENTS WERE NVA-INITIATED GROUND ATTACKS AND ATTACKS BY FIRE, CAUSING 15 FRIENDLY WIA AND ESTIMATED 7 ENEMY KIA AND 4 WIA, THESE WERE THE FIRST ACTIONS IN SEVERAL MONTHS IN WHICH NVA HAS PARTICIPATED. FRIENDLY TROOPS WERE DRIVEN SOUTH ACROSS THE HIN BOUN RIVER. RLAF FLEW 7 COMBAT AIR STRIKES, INCLUDING ONE AC-47, DURING THE FIGHTING. THREE ADDITIONAL MINOR GROUND ATTACKS WERE REPORTED IN MR-IV. ONE RLAF H-34 HELICOPTER RECEIVED GROUND FIRE IN MR-V.

V. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

A. THE USAID COST-OF-LIVING INDEX ROSE 1.1 PERCENT DURING THE WEEK, REFLECTING INCREASE IN GASOLINE AND KEROSENE PRICES, PARTIALLY OFFSET BY DECREASE IN THE PRICE OF SOME FOOD ITEMS. RICE PRICES REMAINED STABLE IN THE VIENTIANE AREA AND DECLINED IN LUANG PRABANG AS SUPPLIES BECAME MORE PLENTIFUL.

B. ON JANUARY 31, RLG APPROVED INCREASES OF MOGAS (24 PERCENT), DIESEL (51 PERCENT) AND KEROSENE (41 PERCENT) ABOVE NOVEMBER 1973 PRICE, FOLLOWING INCREASE IN CRUDE PRICES IN EARLY JANUARY. ACUTE FUEL CRISIS IN LAOS ENDED WITH ARRIVAL OF SHIPMENTS FROM THAILAND FEBRUARY 5, FOLLOWING NOTIFICATION BY RTG THAT ALL POL EXPORT PERMITS HAD BEEN APPROVED THROUGH FEBRUARY 14. OIL COMPANIES EXPECT CONTINUING SUPPLY AT 1973 LEVELS.

C. FOREIGN EXCHANGE DEMAND REMAINED AT LOW LEVELS REGISTERED SINCE MID-JANUARY.
WHITEHOUSE

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Message Attributes

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Channel Indicators: n/a
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Concepts: COST OF LIVING, PETROLEUM PRODUCTS, ARMISTICE, TREATY VIOLATION, PARAMILITARY FORCES, COMBAT ZONES, POLITICAL SITUATION, COMBAT OPERATIONS, PRICES, STUDENTS
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Draft Date: 06 FEB 1974
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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
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Disposition Authority: rowelle0
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Subject: LAO WEEKLY SITREP - FEBRUARY 6
TAGS: MOPS, PGOV, PFOR, PINT, ECON, LA, LPF
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Type: TE
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